Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make a number of editorial revisions. A substitute specification and abstract have been prepared and are submitted herewith. No new matter has been added. Enclosed is a marked-up copy of the specification and abstract indicating the changes incorporated therein.

Claims 1-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eifrig (US 6,026,195) in view of Kikuchi (US 6,081,208).

Claims 1, 3, 6, 7 and 9 have been amended so as to further distinguish the present invention from the references relied upon in the above-mentioned rejection.

In addition, claims 1-10 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions. These revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. None of these amendments have been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, nor to address issues related to patentability and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

The above-mentioned rejection is submitted to be inapplicable to the amended claims for the following reasons.

Claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi, since claim 1 recites a video decoding method including, in part, preventing a displaying of decoded pixel values on a video display unit, when a stream includes information which is obtained by coding shape values and does not include any information which is obtained by coding pixel values. The combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi fails to disclose or suggest this feature of claim 1.

Eifrig discloses a decoder 300 that is operable to receive and decode encoded data signals received at a terminal 1340. The decoder 300 has a demultiplexer 1342 which demultiplexes the data signals and sends the data signals to a shape decoding function 1344, a motion decoding function 1348 and a texture decoding function 1346. The shape decoding function 1344 recovers shape information from the data signals and sends the shape information to a motion compensation function 1350 and a VOP reconstruction

function 1352. The texture decoding function 1346 performs an inverse DCT on the data signals to recover residue information and sends the residue information to the motion compensation function 1350 and the VOP reconstruction function 1352. The motion decoding function 1348 processes encoded motion vector data in the data signals to recover differential motion vectors and sends them to the motion compensation function 1350 and a motion vector memory 1349. The motion compensation function 1350 uses the information supplied to it to determine a full reference motion vector. The VOP reconstruction function 1352 then uses the information from the motion compensation function 1350, as well as the other data supplied thereto, to reconstruct a block which is to be outputted for display. (See column 18, line 23 - column 19, line 42 and Figure 13). However, as admitted in the rejection, Eifrig fails to disclose or suggest preventing a displaying of decoded pixel values on a video display unit, when a stream includes information which is obtained by coding shape values and does not include any information which is obtained by coding pixel values. As a result, Kikuchi is relied upon in the combination as disclosing this feature.

Kikuchi discloses a decoder 101 for decoding run-length compressed sub-picture data 32. The decoder 101 includes a coding data separator 103, a pix. color out-stage 104, a continuous code length detector 106, a run-length setter 107 and a microcomputer 112.

The coding data separator 103 extracts 1-block data of the sub-picture data 32 based on a result of the continuous code length detector 106 and separates the data into a number of pixels and pixel data. The number of pixels is sent to the run-length setter 107 and the pixel data is sent to the pix. color out-stage 104. The run-length setter 107 receives a signal from the continuous code length detector 106 indicating whether current block data continues to a line end and the pixel data from the coding data separator 103. Based on this information, the run-length setter 107 determines a number of pixel dots of a block which is being decoded, and outputs a display enable signal to the pix. color out-stage 104 during an interval corresponding to the number of dots. During the interval, the pix. color out-stage 104 sends the pixel data received from the coding data separator 103 to a display unit for display.

When the microcomputer 112 changes a start line of decoding to scroll the display contents of a sub-picture, a data line for decoding used for decoding may not be present in a preset display area. If this occurs, pixel data for compensation is prepared in advance. When a line shortage is detected, the current display mode is switched to an insufficient pixel data display mode whereby the pix. color out-stage 104 switches from outputting the pixel data received from the coding data separator 103 to outputting the prepared pixel data. Instead of outputting the prepared pixel data, another option for addressing the line shortage is to stop the decoding operation by controlling the pix. color out-stage 104 to stop the display of a sub-picture during an interval in which there is insufficient pixel data. (See column 24, line 5 - column 25, line 13).

Based on the above discussion, it is apparent that the decoder 101 of Kikuchi is capable of either displaying predetermined pixel data (i.e., a predetermined video signal) or not displaying anything when pixel data is missing (i.e., when there a line shortage). On the other hand, claim 1 recites that the displaying of decoded pixel values on a video display unit is prevented when a stream includes information which is obtained by coding shape values and does not include any information which is obtained by coding pixel values. There is nothing disclosed or suggested in Kikuchi that indicates that the decision as to whether or not to display the pixel data (sub-picture) is dependent on the presence or absence of information which is obtained by coding shape values in the sub-picture data 32. Instead, the only factor used to decide whether or not to display the pixel data is whether or not the pixel data itself is present. As a result, it is apparent that the combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi fails to disclose or suggest the present invention as recited in claim 1.

As for claims 3, 6, 7 and 9, these claims are patentable over the combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi for similar reasons as set forth above in support of claim 1. That is, claims 3, 6, 7 and 9 each recite, in part, performing some operation, when a stream includes information which is obtained by coding shape values and does not include any information which is obtained by coding pixel values, which feature is not disclose or suggested in the combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi.

Because of the above mentioned distinctions, it is believed clear that claims 1-10 are allowable over the combination of Eifrig and Kikuchi. Furthermore, it is submitted

that the distinctions are such that a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention would not have been motivated to make any combination of the references of record in such a manner as to result in, or otherwise render obvious, the present invention as recited in claims 1-10. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1-10 are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there are issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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